



Connecticut Association of
Prevention Professionals, Inc.

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To: Members of the Judiciary Committee
Re: Testimony Regarding **SB-1085**

IMPACTS ON YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

The Connecticut Association of Prevention Professionals is dedicated to the protection of our youth against the potentially life-long debilitating effects of substance abuse and addiction. Studies dating back to the 1990's¹ demonstrate that marijuana is addictive, especially for our youth. Peer reviewed scientific research, published in highly regarded journals have demonstrated the negative impacts on adolescent brain development, including permanent brain damage for regular adolescent users².

Advocates for legalizing retail sales of marijuana continue to propose that legalizing marijuana would only impact adults. Well if we haven't learned our lesson from Big Tobacco and Alcohol and their targeting of youth in their marketing practices, one only has to look at the vaping industry marketing practices, and the results of the vaping epidemic among our youth to know that commercializing marijuana will heavily impact youth. Ask any high school in CT if vaping in schools is a problem and their answer is an emphatic yes. The targeted, creative and misleading marketing practices of JUUL and other companies has led to an explosion of youth vaping and a new generation becoming addicted to tobacco. These companies modeled their "playbook" after Big Tobacco and the marijuana industry is already doing the same.

Like the tobacco industry, marijuana is often sold in forms that are deliberately targeting youth and young adults – cookies, ice cream, candy, and even soda. Edible marijuana makes up 20-50% of marijuana sold in the states where it is legalized. States have discovered that it is not uncommon for marijuana products to be mislabeled, providing inaccurate THC concentration levels and other ingredients. Further, communities in these states have been overwhelmed with marijuana products and paraphernalia. In Colorado, there are more marijuana stores than McDonald's and Starbucks combined. Youth use of marijuana is higher in legalized states than in non-legalized states³

BLACK MARKET ACTIVITY AND CRIME

The legalization of marijuana has increased, not decreased, marijuana black market activity. Law enforcement have been busy interdicting illegal production and sales throughout these four states and the District of Columbia. There is a correlation between where marijuana use is legal and increased crime rates.

Organized crime has surged since Colorado liberalized marijuana policies, including cartel activity from Mexico and other international drug syndicates. The past President of the Colorado Association of Chiefs of Police stated last year that "Organized crime filings have skyrocketed in Colorado since marijuana legalization. We had one filing in 2007 and by 2015, we had 40."⁴ In February 2015, Colorado Attorney General Cynthia Coffman told reporters: "The criminals are still selling on the black market. ... We have plenty of cartel activity in Colorado (and) plenty of



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illegal activity that has not decreased at all.” In 2017 she announced the largest cartel marijuana bust in Colorado history

PROJECTED REVENUE VS COSTS TO THE STATE AND CONSUMERS

Proponents of legalization tout the revenues that marijuana taxes will bring into state coffers, helping to solve our budget crisis. These statements misrepresent revenue and omit the costs we’ve seen pile up in other states.

Although a full cost accounting of marijuana legalization would be impossible at present, enough data exists to make rough-and-ready estimates of certain likely direct and short-term costs. The national SAM organization completed a report, **“THE PROJECTED COSTS OF MARIJUANA LEGALIZATION IN CONNECTICUT, 2018”**. The full report can be found at this link: <http://www.cappct.org/ct-sam>. This report concludes that even a very conservative cost estimate limited to only the issues above would cost Connecticut approximately \$216 million in 2020, which would be the third year of legalization if the policy was implemented in 2018. (According to data from the Connecticut General Assembly’s Office of Fiscal Analysis, the legalization program will only be fully operational in its third year of operation.)

Such costs exceed, by more than 90 percent, the maximum projected official revenue estimate of \$113.6 million for the third year of the proposed legalization program according to data from the Connecticut General Assembly’s Office of Fiscal Analysis.

Further, even without considering such costs, **the maximum projected revenue estimate would account for far less than one percent of the state budget**. Such a conclusion is also consistent with well-established information about alcohol and tobacco, two legal drugs whose costs to society are at least 10 times the tax revenue their sale generates for the state.

These projected costs are broken down below. (Due to rounding, the “Total” number may not reflect the exact sum of the subtotals of the individual “Cost centers.”)

Cost center	Projected annual cost	Percentage of OFA’s projected revenues (high estimate)	Percentage of OFA’s projected revenues (low estimate)
Regulatory costs	\$15.9 million	14.0%	29.2%
Increased drugged-driving fatalities	\$49.5 million	43.6%	91.0%
Increased drugged-driving injuries	\$25.4 million	22.3%	46.6%
Increased property damage to vehicles related to drugged	\$26.5 million	23.3%	48.7%



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driving			
Increased ER visits from marijuana intoxication	\$4.4 million	3.8%	8.0%
Marijuana-concentrate extraction lab explosions	\$3.6 million	3.2%	6.6%
Increased homelessness	\$2.7 million	2.4%	4.9%
Workplace: Increased absenteeism	\$68.1 million	59.9%	125.1%
Workplace: Injuries (full-time employees)	\$20.1 million	17.7%	36.9%
TOTAL	\$216.0 million	190.1%	397.1%
<i>Plus additional, presently Unquantifiable costs</i>	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>Unknown</i>

Even under this extremely conservative scenario, and omitting important cost centers such as long-term health costs, marijuana legalization will cost Connecticut about \$216 million in year 3 of retail marijuana sales, over 90 percent more than the maximum official revenue estimate of \$113.6 million for that year, and almost 300 percent more than the minimum official revenue estimate of \$54.4 million.

Thank you for the opportunity to have our concerns about SB1085 be a part of the public record.

The Connecticut Association of Prevention Professionals

Sources:

1. Anthony, J.C., Warner, L.A., & Kessler, R.C. (1994); Giedd. J.N., 2004 ;
2. *The Lancet Psychiatry*, Silins & Mattick Sept. 2014; *Addiction*. 2016 Oct;111(10):1825-35; Meier, M.H., et al., 2012; MacLeod, J., et al., 2004.
3. *Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration*. (2018, December). *State Data Tables and Reports From the 2016-2017 NSDUH*. Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/nsdub/state-reportsNSDUH-2017>
4. *California Secretary of State. California General Election Tuesday November 8, 2016: Official Voter Information Guide*. 2016